**Level 4 Information Handout 2013**

At Vermont Primary School we aim to be nut free.

Please ensure that all food coming to school is free of nuts.

www.level4vps.wikispaces.com

**Grade 5 Teachers :**

John Hoskin, Paul Souter, Georgina Simmons

**Grade 6 Teachers:**

Gillian Prentice (Level Coordinator), Russell Hall, and Peta Jenkin

**Responsibilities**

* It is our aim to encourage the students to be responsible for their learning by completing their tasks on time.
* Children should take everything they need into class as the beginning of the day, after recess and lunchtime.
* Students are required to be punctual. Arrive before 8.55am. If a child arrives after 9am they are to sign in through the office.
* They need to organise their time efficiently so that they fit in school work, social, sporting and family commitments and balance their time.
* Children need to learn to deal with problems that may arise from time to time. If you have any issues please clarify them first with your child’s teacher.
* Children also need to be a reliable source of information about school activities. We are asking parents to please read all notes and diaries.
* Parents may use the diary to communicate with the teachers where required and vice-versa. Please sign and date any messages sent home by teachers to indicate that they have been read and we will do the same.
* Medical or absence notes need to be written on a piece of paper and not in the diary as they are filed.
* It would be appreciated if all notices could be returned A.S.A.P from being sent home.
* All notes that are to be returned to school will be sent home on pink paper.
* **Eating** – the children must eat their food in the allocated eating area if they have not finished eating in class.
* **Diaries -** this year students will be using their diaries more often.
  + Each time they have an Individual Learning Meeting with their teacher, they will be required to write their goal in their diaries and get it signed by a parent. Please assist us in getting the students in the routine of having their diary at school each day.
  + In the front of your child's diary, there is a note about how we expect the diary to be used. Please read this carefully. This is an organisational skill we would like to instil in the students prior to their secondary schooling.

**Behaviour**

* The children have written a list of expected behaviours at school and consequences for breaking school rules. Each child has a Demerit Point card whereby 10 points are allocated at the beginning of the year and when a child breaks a rule or displays inappropriate behaviour, points will be deducted.
* If all points are lost, parents will be contacted. (A new card will be issued at the start of Semester 2.) Then children will miss out on some or all excursions, incursions, Level 4 sport, be taken off the yard, will be working in Mrs Cook or Mrs Stickland’s office or will be asked to write apology letters. These are just some of the consequences that may be given.
* We ask that you support your child’s teacher by discussing appropriate behaviour at school.

**Homework**

* Homework is given out on a Monday and the children have 10 days to complete it. It is therefore due on Thursday of the following week.
* They are expected to complete the homework in their homework books and fill in a reading log for the 10 days. Generally, 10 reading entries are expected. We ask that you sign these each homework period and also sign their homework book.
* The children are given a score out of 10 and once they reach a total of 50 points, they are allowed to have a free 10 day period of no homework. However, they are still expected to read.
* We understand that some children have a busy schedule outside of school with sporting commitments or extra-curricular activities. This is the purpose for the homework being stretched over 10 days.
* If there are circumstances where your child is unable to complete the homework, for example, a death or extreme illness, please communicate this directly with your child’s teacher. Sports training, birthday parties, sleep overs etc are unacceptable excuses for not completing homework on time.

**English**

**READING** (Australian Curriculum refers to this as Reading and Viewing)

* **At home**
  + All students are required to read for a minimum of 15 minutes each night.
  + Your teacher will advise you on how often you should listen to your child read and discuss the text.
* **At school**
  + **Middle Years Approach is used**
    - The students will complete activities targeted at their Individual Learning Goals, therefore, not all students complete the same activities during the week.
    - In the Reading and Viewing Time there will be a Guided Reading Group and independent groups focusing on comprehension, language, literature or literacy.
    - The purpose of the Guided Reading books is to practise reading strategies taught under the guidance of a teacher as well as focus on deepening their understanding of the text.
    - Our main focus is on comprehension and assisting the students to understand the text at an in-depth level.

**WRITING**

* **Each year we study different genres**
  + Narrative
  + Report
  + Poetry
  + Persuasive / Exposition
  + Recount
* **We use a mixture of the middle years approach with writing and whole group focus**
  + Teacher would sit with one group and really focus and guide the children as they work.
  + Other children will be completing their work independently.
  + Come back together at the end to share our work.
* **The lessons start with an introductory activity aimed at improving writing skills –sentence beginnings, words we could use instead of repeating ‘and then’ etc.**
* **At the end of the session, children are asked to reread their work and edit it** 
  + Editing involves spelling and grammatical errors. There is also a focus on punctuation and paragraphing.
  + Not every piece of writing is published into a good copy.
* **ICT and Writing**
  + The students have the opportunity to create multimodal texts in class and during the ICT specialist time.
  + These texts look at various modes such as sound and movement.

**SPELLING**

* **Homework**
  + There is a Spelling Activity in fortnightly homework which is based on topical words being covered at the time as well as targeted words for individual students
* **Spelling Mastery**
  + Spelling Mastery is a 6 level spelling series designed primarily for students in grades 1 through to 6.
  + It is designed to develop students’ spelling skills through 3 strategies (interwoven)
  + Phonemic
    - For beginners
    - Teaches students predictable spellings for different sounds.
    - Eg. mat, sat, fat
  + Morphographic
    - For more advanced spellers
    - The program teaches them to spell meaningful units of words (prefixes, bases, suffixes) and combine them to make multisyllabic words
    - Eg. Prefix – re, dis, un // Base – cover pute // Suffix – ed, able = many combinations of those combine to make over 20 words eg coverable, covered, discover, discoverable, discovered
  + The whole-word approach
    - Approach used at all levels to teach common words that cannot be taught with phonemic or morphographic strategies
    - Eg. thought, through
  + How it runs
    - Students are assessed and placed into groups based on their current spelling ability. A / B / C / D etc
    - Each group meets for approximately 30m for 4 days a week and there is a Spelling Test every 5th lesson

**SPEAKING AND LISTENING**

* Throughout the year they are also required to present talks to the grade.
* There is also a focus during reading – the ability to retell what they have read in sequence, answer a question, explain their point of view etc
* Speaking and Listening focusses on turn taking, retelling in order, linking events, cause and effect, expressing ourselves clearly, following instructions, eye contact, fluency, expression, body language and changing the way we speak depending on who we are speaking to.

**Maths**

* Through lots of research we know a few fundamental truths about how students learn. The Middle Years Numeracy Program is based around these ideas and as a level we incorporate it into our lessons.
* Maths lessons no longer run as a whole class. **All students learn in different ways** therefore consideration is given to strengths, weaknesses and different learning styles. We split students into different groups (as in literacy) and they work with the teacher, hands on, computer, playing maths games and book work.
* As with Middle Years Literacy the focus is on partner and group work as research shows that **students learn from and with other students**. They can share strategies, successes and failures. They see that there are lots of ways to solve similar problems. Through explaining their strategies, they are consolidating their own understanding.
* **Students learn when they feel good about themselves**. We place a large emphasis on games and open ended problems where all students can achieve success regardless of ability. For example instead of asking what is 12,610 + 350 we will say the answer is 12,960 what equations can you make that equal 12, 960.
* The Australian Curriculum Strand for Mathematics in Grade 5 and 6 are:
  + **Number and Algebra** – Number and Place Value, Fractions and Decimals, Money and Finance, Patterns and Algebra
  + **Measurement and Geometry –** Units of Measurement, Shape, Location and Transformation
  + **Statistics and Probability –** Chance, Data Representation and Interpretation

**Inquiry**

* Inquiry includes history, geography, sociology and science.
* The question we are looking at this term is *Does History Make Us Who We Are?* with a focus on Australian History.
* It is also integrated into other curriculum areas including English and Mathematics where possible.
* Some units will have incursions and excursions.
* Any excursions notices must be handed in two days before the excursion or they will not be able to go. They will however be expected at school where they will join another class.
* As we transition into the Australian Curriculum, AusVELS, Vermont Primary School will be updating and changing some of the Inquiry topics. This will be a gradual process over the next 2 years and more information will be available through the School Newsletter.

**Focus Students**

* Each student has been allocated a day over a three week timetable where they will be one of 2 or 3 Focus Students.
* On their day, the Focus Students will have a consultation time with their teacher where they will discuss their Individual Learning Goals and read to the teacher.
* During the day the Focus Students will share what they have learnt from the day’s lessons with the rest of the class.
* The teacher will complete a reading assessment on that day and a reading goal will be set for the next three weeks.